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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, April 19, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Easter Dinner Questions." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

Easter questions have been popping up so thick and fast in my mail-bag this week that I see no way out of declaring another question-and-answer day right now. Tomorrow you'll be off early to do your Easter marketing and you'll want all these problems settled before you go.

First, let's settle the salad problem for one of our listeners who writes that she has her Easter dinner all planned except the salad and there she's "stumped." She asks: "What would be a suitable salad for Easter?" and "Have you ever heard of bird's nest salad? I like the name because it sounds just like spring. But I don't know how to make it. Could you suggest?"

Well, I'll only suggest. And you can take these ideas I pass along as they suit your tastes and your menu. The only salad I've ever seen arranged to look like eggs in a nest was made this way: A "nest" of shredded lettuce or other crisp shredded greens. And "eggs" in the center about the size of robin's eggs made from a mixture of cream or cottage cheese and chopped nuts. French dressing for this salad.

Another nice Easter salad is spring salad. This is well-seasoned, colorful, crisp combination of vegetables piled on green lettuce leaves or garnished with watercress. The vegetables you'll use will depend on what you can get in your market at this time of year. But here's one good mixture just as a suggestion. Chopped cabbage, chopped green onion shoots, chopped celery, green pepper either chopped or cut in thin strips, and finally chopped radishes. Dress with French dressing and add a bit of mustard and horseradish to it. A big green bowl of this spring salad looks most tempting. Or, you can serve it on individual salad plates. Crisp thin cheese crackers toasted in the oven make good accompaniments for this salad.

A jellied mold of vegetables is also suitable for Easter. You might even tint the jelly a delicate shade of green.

And that reminds me of another question. Someone wants to know what the color scheme for an Easter dinner table should be. Well, as far as I know tradition lays down no hard and fast rules for Easter colors. You have much more leeway in your color choice than on Christmas or St. Patrick's Day, for example. Easter is the time for the soft delicate shades that suggest early spring -- soft yellow and green and so on. Intense, vivid shades don't suit this holiday.

Question number three is about a good Easter dessert. That question has so many good answers that I don't know where to start. Rhubarb, pineapple and strawberries are the spring fruits and you can make these into anyone of a number of good desserts. Did you ever try rhubarb sponge, made like lemon gelatin sponge, but with rhubarb juice instead of lemon juice? Did you ever try rhubarb sherbet? Rhubarb-strawberry tart is still another suitable dessert. Pineapple bavarian cream is still another. Custard desserts are suitable for Easter. So are egg whips made with fruit. Sponge cake and angel food are popular spring cakes.

The last question is from a young housekeeper who wants to know about good veal dishes for a family of two. I have a number of answers to that question. In fact, the young animals like veal and lamb naturally provide small cuts for small-family use. The small cuts of veal are the chops, steaks and cutlet. The cutlet, you know, is sliced from the veal round. For a family of two, veal cutlet will provide several delicious dishes. You can have the slice thick or thin as you please. And you can leave it whole or cut it in pieces, all depending on how you intend to cook it. Perhaps the most usual way of fixing veal cutlets is to cut the slices just the right size for one serving. Then bread each piece, brown it in a little fat, and finish the cooking in a covered frying pan. Some people prefer to fry the cutlets in deep fat from the start. By the way, always in cooking veal remember that it is a very lean meat. So however you cook it, it will generally be better if you add fat.

The usual veal shoulder or veal thigh roasts are too large for a family of two unless you plan on left overs. If you and your husband want a roast for just one meal, buy a slice of veal round; then stuff, roll, and tie it. Season the roll, brown it in fat, and then cook it in a moderate oven in a covered pan. Did you notice that I said covered pan? That rule holds for veal because it is so lean that it is likely to dry out in an open pan.

Well, one of my favorite veal dishes and one that will fit nicely into an Easter menu is veal birds. Veal prepared this way looks for all the world like real little roast birds -- roast quail, perhaps, or some unusual new bird. Here are a few reasons why this dish is a good one to have on your list. Veal birds are delicious in flavor, often inexpensive especially at this time of year, and best of all adaptable for any size family. You can prepare just enough birds for a little platterful for your husband or yourself. Or you can prepare enough for Aunt Minnie and her large hungry family when they come in to Sunday dinner with you. Here are a couple of points to remember about veal birds. Cook them in the oven in a covered casserole. Add a little fat in the stuffing you use and then wrap each bird in bacon.

Here's the recipe for veal birds. This is just about enough to serve two or three people but you can enlarge the recipe for guests.

1 pound of veal cutlet

1/4 cup of chopped celery

1/2 onion, minced

1 tablespoon of butter or other fat

1 cup of stale breadcrumbs

1/2 teaspoon of salt

Pepper

1/4 pound of sliced bacon.

Once more. (REPEAT)

Have the veal sliced as thin as possible. Cut it into strips two to three inches wide and about four inches long, according to the natural divisions of the meat. To make the stuffing, first cook the celery and onion for a few minutes in the fat. Then add the bread crumbs and seasonings. Mix thoroughly. Put a spoonful of the stuffing on each strip of veal. Roll carefully. Bind with a slice of bacon. Skewer in place with toothpicks. Brown the birds slowly on all sides in a skillet. Transfer to a casserole. Add the drippings, cover and cook in a moderate oven until tender. This will take about 45 minutes. Serve with the brown meat drippings and garnish with parsley or cress.

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